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DID YOU HEAR THAT?

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NORFOLK — The crackling blizzard of codes, numbers and abbreviations flying across Virginia's public safety airwaves may be clearing up.

Gov. Timothy M. Kaine on Monday announced an effort to get the state's first responders and public safety personnel to use plain talk instead of codes.

In other words, he's asking police officers, firefighters and rescuers to just say "barking dog" instead of "10-49," "purse snatching" in place of "65P" or "arrest" rather than "ART."

It's designed to help agencies coordinate with one another in emergencies.

"Technologically, if you can all speak to each other, that's great," said Chris Essid, the commonwealth interoperability coordinator. "But if everyone's using different codes, you've got chaos."

Local scanner rats might have noticed that Norfolk police gave up 10-codes last year, joining Portsmouth and Virginia Beach in the land of plain talk (with some exceptions for officer safety). Chesapeake and Suffolk still use the codes.